



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Annual Stop Flu at School vaccination clinics begin statewide

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health's (DOH) annual Stop Flu at School program began this week and will continue in 185 public schools statewide through Nov. 27, 2019. The voluntary program administers free flu shots to students in kindergarten through eighth grade who are enrolled at participating schools. Approximately 31,500 students are expected to be vaccinated through the program this year.

"We are glad schools and parents continue to appreciate and find value in this program," said Health Director Bruce Anderson. "The number of students signed up to receive their flu shots through the Stop Flu at School program has been increasing in recent years."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an annual flu vaccination for everyone ages six months and older. Since 2010, CDC estimates that between 130 and 1,200 children (younger than 18 years) have died from flu each year.

"Vaccination is our best defense against the flu. It can help prevent illness, but more importantly, it decreases the risk of severe illness, which can result in hospitalizations and death," said Dr. Sarah Park, state epidemiologist. "While there were no influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported in Hawai'i during the 2018-2019 season, children, even healthy children, are hospitalized or die from the flu every year in the U.S."

Since flu can cause severe illness in people of all ages, DOH encourages everyone to talk to their healthcare provider about the vaccine and consider getting vaccinated. For those unable to be vaccinated through the Stop Flu at School program, flu vaccine is available through healthcare provider offices and clinics as well as pharmacies, for those older than age 11 years.

For a list of vaccinating pharmacies statewide, visit the DOH Vaccine Locator online at <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/vaccines-immunizations/vaccine-locators/>. Some locations require a prescription from the patient's medical provider. Please contact the pharmacy or clinic to confirm vaccine availability and restrictions that may apply.

DOH also recommends other flu prevention strategies, including staying home and away from other people in the house when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands frequently. For more information about the flu, visit http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/influenza-flu/.

To learn more about the Stop Flu at School program, go to <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/about-us/programs/stop-flu-at-school/> or call the Aloha United Way's information and referral line at 2-1-1.

About Stop Flu at School

Stop Flu at School, Hawai'i's school-located vaccination program, is an innovative partnership between the State of Hawai'i Departments of Health and Education. This program is endorsed by the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Hawai'i Association of Family Practitioners and is paid for by federal funds and contributions from health insurers.

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